

Dan in Beersheba :
OR THE
IDOLATRY
OF
Communion Sermons,

In a few Reflections on that Pamphlet,
Dan an Adder in the Path, &c.

To which is added,
Good ADVICE to MINISTERS
and their Wives.

Being an Argument against another vulgar
Error of the same Kidney.

AMOS v. 5. *And pass not to Beersheba.*
PROV. xxvi. 5. *Answer a Fool according to his Folly,
lest he be wise in his own Conceit.*

*Æquo animo audienda sunt Imperitorum concitilia, & ad
honestam videnti contemnendus ipse contemptor.*

SENEC.

*Non ego ventosa Plebis suffragia venor,
Impensitis Canarum & trita Munera Vestis.*

HOR.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by WILLIAM BROWN and COMPANY, and
Sold at his Shop in the Parliament Clofs. 1721.
[Price, Two Pence.]

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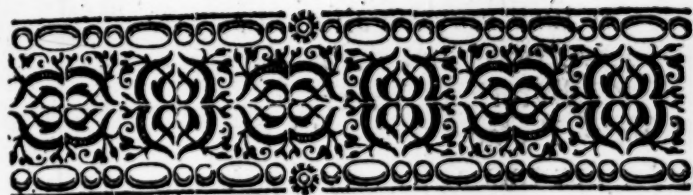
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Dan in Beersheba :

O R,

*The Idolatry of Communion
Sermons, &c.*



HIS Paper is very formally introduced with a *Preface*, and concluded by a *Postscript*, from another Hand ; but all anonymous : And tho' said to be writ by a sincere Lover of the Church of *Scotland*, may be contrived by a Jesuite, (if not also published) for the Papists still claim the Church of *Scotland*, as well as the Presbyterians or Episcopalians. And suppose it be by

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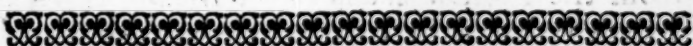
some Presbyterian high-flying hackney Writer, yet such may be also under *Loyola's* Pay, and serve both, in continuing the Division of the Presbyterian Church.

THE Prefacer pretends Fear as his Principle, but that is a very dangerous Motive, and oftner proceeds from chymical Fancies and Bugbears, than any real Cause; so till the ~~Justness of the~~ Grounds of Fear be made more evidently to appear than the Author does, all his Zeal, in my humble Opinion, is only beating the Air. And if he call this new Mode of Communion in the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, *An infectious Gangrene*, I call it a happy Crisis, for curing the Formality and ostentive Religion of too many, in being forward to follow Communion only for Sermons, who very rarely Communicate, or are otherwise Exemplary in their Walk, except in Talk, a splendid Profession and Pretence of Exercise, and many Scruples. Now, whose Opinion is justest, his or mine, upon Consideration of what follows, I shall refer to the impartial and unbiggoted Reader: Only, it seems a Piece of great Arrogance in the Author to censure the Deed of a Presbytery, especially when it is the putting in Practice the 11th Act of the General Assembly 1712, and the more, until the Synod in *November* last had past, That he might have
seen

seen whether the Presbytery had been quarrelled for the same, either in the Visitation of their Presbytery Book, or any other way. And tho' this Author's Procedure in that respect is so officious and irregular, yet the same must be glossed over with the specious Pretence, *That it is not factious Zeal, or to promote a Division, makes him interpose, (when nothing can be more so) and that he longs to see more of the Life and Power of Religion than is the Portion of our Time.* In this I also join Wishes with him; yet I humbly plead, that the many Sermons, long Discourses, and great Crowds at Communions, has so much encouraged the Formality of meer Show of Person and Lip-service, that so generally reigns in this Age, *Ja. i. 23. 25.* Nor is it to the Purpose, that it is an unprecedented Case for any one Presbytery to alter our present Constitution, when no superior Authority can be alledged; What then are the Acts of Assembly 1711, and 1712? recommending the frequent Celebration of the Lord's Supper, but especially the *Act 1645, Sess. 14.* So if this Author, and his Approvers, had pleased to look so far back as to the Zeal of our first Reformers, and even to the Dawn of our Reformation, they will find in the first Book of Discipline, *Anno 1560, 9. Head, of The Policy of the Kirk, Four Times in the Year*

we think sufficient to the Administration of the Lord's Supper, and which may be distinguished, that the Superstition of Times may be avoided, as on the first *Sundays* of *March, June, September, and December*; and by an Act of the Assembly 1562, it is ordained, That the Communion be ministred Four Times in the Year within Burgh, and Twice Yearly in Landward; and if the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* have taken Eight Years Advise-ment before they shewed their Regard to these late Acts of Assembly, and other former Acts, concerning frequent Communicat- ing, they are more excuseable than all the other Presbyteries in the Kingdom, who have hitherto slighted all these Acts, which, I humbly think, any single Minister may be answerable to do, by restricting his Sermons accordingly, as some few Ministers some- times do; but the more, when a whole Pres- bytery agrees thereto, unless the Acts of As- sembly, or of the Presbytery, are to be ob- served by the Minister, yea or not at the Option of their People, who must be plea- sed, not only Elders, but whole Moblie, and so turn all Government not only into the In- dependent Lay, but to that of Anarchy and Confusion; otherwise their Ministers may Preach, Pray, and Communicate by them- selves. But bold Assertion, without Proof,
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is enough to take with the Credulous and Clamorous, especially if any part of that Paper is writ or approved by some Minister in this present Church, as I wish I had not too much Reason to suspect it, when one of the Ministers in the City of *Edinburgh* was not harmonious with his other Brethren, as to the said Act, last Communion. So far for the Preface.



DAN. *Considerations upon the
new Scheme of Communions.*

THE first Paragraph of these Considerations, as most part of the Arguments therein, run upon a wrong Supposition: For, tho' no serious Protestant doubts of the savory Report of the Church of *Scotland* over the Reformed World; yet, that all its Worship is according to the *Pattern in the Mount*; and that therefore it has attained unto Perfection in this fallible State of the Church Militant, (altho' comparatively pure) is what, I think, none will in Earnest pretend to: So neither can the same be pretended in the Dispensation of the holy Sacra-

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in this Church, That because the way of Administration with all the Solemnity we have so long practised, has been so eminently countenanced of Heaven, as to testify the Lord's Approbation thereof, that therefore every Circumstance thereof is Divine, Infallible, and Unalterable, and no Part of the Method of Sermons, Discourses, &c. are to be varied, under the Certification of departing from the *Pattern shewed in the Mount*, is what I hope none will deliberately alledge; and the more, seeing the *Westminster Directory* has only a general Form for the Celebration of the Sacraments, but not a particular Form of Institution in every Point, which is left to the Discretion of the Celebrator; for the Presbyterians have no Liturgy, nor do restrict themselves to any Forms in Worship: How then can this Author state the particular Method of Administration of this Ordinance, which is neither to be altered, or omitted, under the Hazard of bringing in Novelties into the Church? On the contrary, the present Constitution since the Revolution, or, as he expresses it, the Toleration is rather an Innovation, and departing from the old Institution of 1645, when this Church was in its perfect, at least flourishing State; and I may say, according to some,
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the Glorious and Golden Age of the Church. At which Time of Zeal and Perfection, there is found no Act or Appointment by the Assembly, or in the said *Directory*, for a Fast-Day before the Communion, and Three Sermons thereon, or Two Sermons on the *Monday*, as a second Thanksgiving; but only, *Act, Sess. 14. Ass. 1645*. That there is to be one Preparation Sermon on *Saturday* only, only one Sermon before serving of the Tables, and one Thanksgiving after the Communion is ended. And in the *Directory*, as to the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, The Communion of the Supper of the Lord is frequently to be celebrated, but how often, may be considered and determined by the Ministers, and other Church-Governours of each Congregation, as they shall find most convenient, for the Comfort and Edification of the People committed to their Charge. Now, as the Acts of the Assembly since the Revolution bear no special Appointment of a Fast-day before the Communion, nor of two Sermons on the *Monday* after the Communion; so there cannot from thence a Direction be taken, how many Sermons shall be upon the Fast-day, *Saturday*, and *Monday*, during the same; so tho' it may be easily granted, that many Sermons at the Beginning of the Revolution were thought

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necessary

necessary, both to direct the Ignorant, instruct the Young, and to reconcile these who had been Hearers of Episcopal Ministers, by longer, if not more lively and more numerous Sermons, than they had been used to, and even more Solemnity was needful in the Administration of that Sacrament, when it was such a Rarity to all, and could not possibly be celebrated in many Congregations Yearly, there being few old Ministers restored to their Charges ; and both old and young Ministers finding a very small Number fit or willing to be Communicants ; for these that did Communicate in a Dozen of Parishes then, were not so many as now in One or Two ; and yet, most part of the People being curious to hear and see, rather as to Communicate, put the Ministers (to indulge the Humour) upon this Practice of many Sermons. This is also the Sentiment of the Reverend Mr. *Willison*, in the *Preface* to his *Sacramental Catechism*, Page 18. which, tho' many other Ministers of fervent Zeal and the deepest Thought, long since, saw needful to be restricted, (and the most Part that I have conversed with have expressed their Sense of the Inconveniencies therein) yet none had the Courage, by an express Act, to abridge these Sermons, till the Reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, by their Act, 27th *April* 1720, did ;

did; and the Tenor of which Act is as follows. ' The Presbytery having considered ' the 11th Act of the General Assembly, holden in the Year 1712, for the more frequent Celebration of the Lord's Supper; ' as also, the 6th Act of the Assembly in the preceeding Year, whereby it is recommended to Presbyteries, to do what they can, to have it so ordered, that the foresaid holy Sacrament may be administred within their Bounds thorow the several Months of the Year, that serious Persons may have the Opportunity, with the more Conveniency, the oftner to Participate thereof within their own Parishes, or in Neighbour Congregations, if they desire the same. And ' having considered the Opinion of Sessions in this Matter given in, Did, and hereby do earnestly recommend to the several Ministers and Kirk-Sessions within their Bounds, to be careful, that the foresaid holy Ordinance be celebrated in their respective Churches, at least the Months after-mentioned, viz. *January in Canongate, February in North-Leith, March in all the Churches of Edinburgh, April in Corstorphine, May in South-Leith and Kirk-Newtown, June in West-Kirk and Curry, July in Colingtoun and Ratho, and again in Canongate, August in Libberton and Crammond,*

‘ September again in *West-Kirk*, October in
 ‘ *Duddingstoun* and again in all the Churches
 ‘ of *Edinburgh*; in November again in *South-*
 ‘ *Leith*. And if any Parish cannot conveni-
 ‘ ently keep their Diets above-mentioned, it
 ‘ is recommended to such to do it in the
 ‘ Month of *December* that Year. And that
 ‘ this solemn Exercise may be perform’d with
 ‘ more Seriousness and Decency; and Com-
 ‘ municants may have more Time for private
 ‘ Meditation and Self-Examination; and
 ‘ that as few Ministers as possible may be
 ‘ taken from their Work in their own Pa-
 ‘ rishes, on such Occasions, leaving their
 ‘ Congregations without Sermon, whereby
 ‘ People that are not Communicants do
 ‘ come and incommode Communicants, or
 ‘ prophane the Lord’s Day by Vagueing, or
 ‘ idle Discourfing, and otherwise, to the
 ‘ great Offence of G O D and his People, and
 ‘ the Dishonour of our holy Religion; The
 ‘ Presbytery, upon these Considerations, and
 ‘ for the greater Encouragement of such who
 ‘ are Aged, or tender to attend on Commu-
 ‘ nion Seasons, having agreed, That accord-
 ‘ ing to the ancient Custom in this Church,
 ‘ there be only two Sermons on the Fast-
 ‘ Day, one in the Forenoon, and another in
 ‘ the Afternoon; one Preparation Sermon on
 ‘ *Saturday* in the Afternoon; only two Sermons
 ‘ on

' on the Lord's Day, and one Thanksgiving
 ' Sermon upon *Monday* in the Forenoon: And
 ' Ministers of Neighbour Congregations are
 ' appointed to be careful, that their Church-
 ' es be provided with Sermon both before
 ' and after Noon; and that such that are not
 ' to Communicate be exhorted to keep their
 ' own Parish Church, and not to come and
 ' throng others. And the Presbytery does
 ' not think it proper, that there be Sermons
 ' in the Church-Yards, on such Occasions.
 ' And *Lastly*, It is declared, That this is to
 ' take Effect in *October* next, and from thence-
 ' forth, and *Edinburgh* to begin; and at In-
 ' timation of the Sacrament, it is appointed,
 ' That these Presents be read before the
 ' Congregation, and People Exhorted ac-
 ' cording thereto.

WHICH Act, if considered impartially,
 will be found not only to be made as there-
 in-narrated, with a direct Regard to the Acts
 of Assembly 1711, and 1712, *Concerning Fre-
 quency of Communicating*; but it is altogether
 consistent with the foresaid Act of Assembly
 1645, *Sess. 14.* and also, with the *Directory*
 above-mentioned, whereby, the how often
 the Sacrament is to be celebrated, is left to
 the Determination of the Minister and other
 Church Governours of each Congregation:
 And if thereby every Minister may deter-
 mine,

mine, how much more may a whole Presbytery, with the Opinion of the Sessions, appoint the Times in every Parish? But also, the more to facilitate the same, they found it needful to restrict the Number of Sermons on the Days before and after the Communion; and especially the Presbytery is without Blame, when in this they bring down the Number of Sermons, according to the ancient Custom of this Church, as the said Act expresses: So that, *to stand up for the Practice of the Covenanted Church of Scotland ever since the Toleration, (at least) handed down to us from our reverend and worthy Fathers, who saw the House of the Lord in its former Glory;* is a very perverted Insinuation, and the Practice from the Revolution, of many Sermons, is accountable for, no otherwise than as aforesaid. Nor, without Profanity, can that Practice be called *the Pattern shewed in the Mount*, any more, than the Multitudes that followed our Saviour and his Apostles, upon the first Promulgation of the Gospel, should forbid all Congregational Meeting in Churches, and only allow Multitudes in Streets, and Hills Sides, and other Conventicles, according to the laudable Custom of Mr. *M^cMillan* and which is certainly what this Author and his Approvers would be at.

FROM

FROM Page 8. to 15. the Author takes a great deal of Pains to demonstrate the Necessity of Fasting and Humiliation before any solemn Approach to God, and more, when we are to partake of this solemn, august, and tremendous Ordinance. But who questions that? Only, the Debate is, Whether the Work of a Fast-day be *Preaching* or *Prayer*? And seeing, I hope, it will be easily granted by those that pretend to the greatest Strictness, 'That *Prayer* (which consists in Confession, Deprecation, and Expostulation) is the main Work of a Fast-day, and *Preaching* only necessary to direct in the Exercise of Repentance, Resolutions of Amendment, and the Practice of real Reformation; which is also clear from the *Directory*, *Tit. Fast.* § 4. Then the Doubt is, Whether two Sermons may not be sufficient for Communion Fast-days, altho' Three have been used formerly? Besides, both old and new Acts of Assembly are silent, as to the Number of Sermons on any Fast-days. And even, there is not any such *Head* as *Fasting*, in the *Index* of the Acts of the Assembly, published in *Anno* 1706, by the Reverend Mr. *John Bell* Minister at *Gladsmore*; nor is there any Rule as to the Number of Sermons on Fast-days in the *Directory*.

Now,

Now, I shall fortify this Assertion and Practice, by the Testimony of two Persons that deserve very well of this Church; the First is, the judicious Mr. Steuart of Pardivan, in the *Collections and Observations methodized, concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland*, printed at Edinburgh, in Anno 1709, where, in the Title; *Of the Lord's Supper*, § 7. after in the former § having narrated the Method of Sermons at the Communion, according to the Act of Assembly 1645, says, ' But by the present Practice, the Thursday, or some other Day of the Week preceeding the Communion, is kept as a Fast-day, on which there are Three Sermons, delivered by as many Ministers, (and then very ingenuously acknowledges) which yet to some seems not very proper; for the Design of that Day being a Congregational Fast, on which the Sins of that Parish are to be mourned over before the Lord; no other Minister can have such Knowledge thereof, as he who labours and travels among them. A direct Insinuation, that the Minister of the Parish should take one of the Diets of Sermons on the Fast-day, and why not double their Prayers, and so employ as much Time in publick Worship, as the Minister and Elders,

‘ Elders, according to the Season of the
‘ Year, may find convenient.

THE next is the industrious Mr. *Willison*,
to whom the Church is so much obliged, by
his Discourse on the *Sabbath*, his *Sacramental*
Catechism, and what he has wrote in Defence
of the Government of the Church. In the
Preface to the *Sacramental Catechism*, he very
freely confesses, ‘ That there is one Thing
‘ among us, which is a great Obstruction to
‘ the frequent Celebration of this Ordinance,
‘ viz. The great Number of Ministers and
‘ Preachings now used on such Occasions,
‘ which truly makes that solemn Work a Bu-
‘ siness of such outward Toil and Labour to
‘ the Administrators, as discourages them
‘ frequently to undertake it; so that, till some
‘ Regulation be made in the foresaid Re-
‘ spect, I despair of seeing this Ordinance
‘ dispensed so frequently among us as it
‘ ought to be. In the Days of old, there was
‘ less Preaching at Communions, but much
‘ Power and Life in them; but in our Days,
‘ there is much Preaching, with little Pow-
‘ er. Not that I am against much Preach-
‘ ing at these Occasions, when there is an
‘ Appetite among the Hearers, and when
‘ Plenty of Ministers may be had, without
‘ laying the Neighbouring Congregations
‘ desolate, or proving any Let to the Fre-
‘ quency

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quency of this Ordinance ; but to make it a standing Order, That there shall be so many Preachings, whether there be Appetite or no, or whatever Inconveniency should follow, I apprehend, cannot be easily justified.

UPON the Consideration of all these, suppose the Author of this Paper be a Minister, and more, if he is not, here is the Suffrage both of a Minister and an Elder, against his single Opinion and Testimony, for continuing of three Sermons on the Communion Fast-days ; besides, that in all his Arguments for many Sermons, he is only pleading for outward Worship, and multiplying the Labour and Exercise to the Minister ; which not only precludes the Minister of private Work for himself, but also, when much Time is spent in the Publick, People can be less disposed for private Exercise ; but the more when Fasts are generally little kept, but by attending Sermons, and forbearing laborious and without-Doors Work--- So when, thus this Author has lost all his Labour, in pleading the Necessity of *many Sermons upon the Fast-days, and that the taking away one of them is an Innovation in God's Worship, that may be of dangerous and sad Consequence to the Church of Scotland.* I say, he has more Reason to have exerted his Zeal, in complaining of the lax and unconcerned

concerned Way of observing Fast-days by the Generality of Professors, according to the Decency, or rather Rigour of a Fast; for tho' the Churches are abundantly crowded, yet how few, even outwardly, Fast, or appear with a Behaviour suitable to the Occasion, and as appointed by the *Directory*, *Tit. Fasting*, § 2. And the Cases in which we sin in the Time of Fasting, especially as to *Eating*, mentioned by the worthy Mr. *Durham*, in the *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, upon the Second Command, Page 69. (4to.) This Author, tho' he instanced the Eight Days Fast appointed by the Act of Assembly, 13. March 1569, yet he does not notice in the said Act, as follows: *And in the mean Time, to use the Exercise prescribed before, and to use Sobriety in Eating and Drinking; praying, namely, That God would be pleased to quench that appearing Fire of Intestine Troubles.* *Petrie's Church Hist. Part 3. Page 361.* Where you may observe Praying directed, but no Order for many Sermons.

Page 15. As to that Article in the Act, which discharges any Sermons but one, upon the *Saturday* and Preparation Day; If the Preparation for the Holy Communion consisted in hearing many Sermons, these would be soon granted unto them that are so fond of them; but I am very hopeful, that every

serious Christian will not scruple to yield, that it consists most in personal Exercises of Meditation, Self-Examination, and stirring up of the Graces, especially Sorrow and Love, in beholding a Crucified Saviour, represented in these Symbols of Bread and Wine, (which is plainly exprest in the Prefbytery Act.) Now, when the Time is spent in hearing many and long Sermons, how little Leisure is there, and what a Weariness must our private Exercise be? But that therefore more publick Preparation is necessary than one short Sermon, (seldom used at such Occasions) seems very weakly inforced by his Two Reasons. 1^{mo}. From the Preparation that was made for the *Passover*. 2^{do}. That the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a very awful and tremendous Ordinance; I was not a little pleased when this Author seemed aware, that it may be alledged, *That all the Preparation for the Passover is private Work, and pleads rather for the Act, which allows so much Time for private Work, and freely acknowledges, it is a necessary Duty to employ much Time in solemn private Preparation; but must lament, that even the Time we are not engaged in publick Ordinance is so much misimproven.* But I must ask his Pardon, that I differ from him, when he asserts, *That this strongly pleads, that the publick Preparation we have should*

should not be diminished, to prevent our Abuse of more of our Time before this solemn Work.

As to his Arguments, Page 18. *That it is observable, where most Pains are taken by Ministers in preparing People for that solemn Ordinance, the Hearers are most diligent in private Preparation, and on the contrary, &c. and that it is known from Experience, that Diversity of Gifts are edifying.* I think, I need no more than mention these weighty Arguments, to show how little Force is in them; for, according to this manner of Reasoning, the Minister, instead of all other Parts of his Office, must only every Day Harangue and Preach, and also give their People Change of Preachers to gratify their itching Ears, which the Apostle Paul reproves, 2 Tim. 4. 3.

Also Page 18. he says, in the same Act they appoint, *That there be only one Sermon upon Monday; no doubt, this is, that the People may have more Time for their private Thanksgiving, which is indeed very well observed; yet he adds, But good it is, that this cannot be alledged, I think, we may endure our usual two Sermons now; as well as before; if God deal well with us, we will not grudge to praise him. But I comprehend not, how, by hearing many Sermons, we directly praise G O D; seeing it*

it specially consists in Prayer and singing of Psalms. Yea, he confutes himself in the same Paragraph, by his Instance of our Saviour Jesus, who when he had given the *Passover* and *Lord's Supper*, sung a Hymn; but how proves he, that our Saviour preached a long Time after? This does not in the least appear, but rather the contrary, in the History of the Gospels: Thus, in *Matthew*, after they had sung a Hymn, they went out to the Mount of *Olives*, *Matth.* xxvi. 30. to 47. where our Saviour prayed, and gave his Disciples several Warnings and Admonitions. *Mark* xiv. contains an Account of our Saviour's Institution of the Lord's Supper, and Behaviour after, in the same Manner. Also, *Luke* xxii. from Verse 21. to 37. is a very short Sermon; but as to the xiv, xv, and xvi. Chapters of *John*, the Beginning of the xiii. Chap. implies, That the Consolatory Discourse in that and the following Chapter, was before the Passover, in these Words, Verse 1. *Now before the Feast of the Passover.* But suppose it was after, which does not agree with the Relation of the other *Evangelists* before-mentioned; yet this seems not a Rule to Ministers, no more, than our Saviour's washing his Disciples Feet, and other Actions about the Time, should be our Pattern.

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AND tho' the *Monday* after the Communion be commonly called the *Thanksgiving Day*, yet the Afternoon Sermon on the *Sabbath* is more properly such; and the Meeting on the *Monday* seems rather fitted for directing Communicants, in examining what Good they have reaped from that holy Ordinance, and for directing them in a watchful and circumspect Walk, answerable to the Blessings bestow'd, and Engagements they are under, which is a practical Thanksgiving, *Psal.* l. 23. than as a Thanksgiving. And thus the Directions in one Sermon are more than the best Christian can observe; What Need then of many Sermons?

Page 20. As to the Sermons in the Church-Yard, or without Doors, there can be no solid Argument for the same, except to please the Populace; nor is there any Need of them, were the Communion more frequently celebrated, and Neighbour Parishes not designedly left vacant by the Ministers leaving their own Churches, as the said Act very well cautions: Yet, how amusing is it, for Communicants to have Liberty to hear a Sermon in Time of the Action, either before or after their going to the Table, altho' the same is also forbidden by the 14. *Act*, *Aff.* 1645. but it is like this Author has never noticed this Act. And for what he says
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of weak People, their not being able longer to endure a Throng; if this Method were observed, not only in the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, but by other Presbyteries, it would prevent the crowding of Churches, as those that cannot endure have not a Call to be there, for *the Lord will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*, Matth. ix. 13.

IF any desire further Arguments upon these Heads, you may peruse a little Book printed at *London*, 1704. Entitled, *A Dialogue betwixt a Presbyterian Minister, and a Gentleman of Episcopal Perswasion, concerning the Separation from the Church, as now established in the Church of Scotland*. And suppose, the Cause of Separation is not throughout so well pleaded, yet *Chap. 6. Of the Way of administrating the Lord's Supper*, the Offence in that Matter is so pithily and pungently held forth, that the Defences seem very little to the Purpose. I shall only mention, what he says from two several Books, printed at *London* 1657, both Authors, tho' publick Resolutioners, were hearty Presbyterians, and zealous Covenanters. The First is, *Uldericus Veredicus sive de Statu Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ, Dialogus. Impress. Eleutheripoli Natolicæ, Anno 1657*. Thus Englished: 'They have turned
' the holy Supper either into a Theatrical
' Pomp, or into the Popish Error of *Opus*
' *Operatum*;

‘ *Operatum*; for when that comes to be administered in a Church where any of them is Minister, even they who are in the remote Parts of the Kingdom are warned, at the Day appointed they come from sundry Quarters; these who desire to be esteemed most precious; neither is there one or two Ministers, but many, especially such who are eminent among them for Esteem of Sanctity, or for Gifts, when they come to the Action the most part of them to whom the Benefit belongs (the People of the Parish) are excluded, as if they were Half-Muscovites: But to their own, those of their own Party, of whatever Parish, the heavenly Bread is distributed, as the true Children of GOD. They have there so many Sermons, as were never in any Church before in so short a Time.

THE Title of the other, is a true Representation of the Rise, Progress, and State of Divisions of the Church of Scotland, in which the Author hath these Words concerning this Matter, *Page v. 37.* ‘ Albeit the General Assembly, in the Year 1645, did establish an Order for Uniformity, and preventing Confusion in the Celebration of the Sacrament, wherewith this whole Church rested well satisfied; yet since our Divisions, our dissenting Brethren have taken up a new
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and irregular Way, to omit their way of admitting Persons who come from other Congregations; they do not now ordinarily celebrate this Ordinance, but they have a great many Ministers gathered into it, Six or Seven, or sometimes Double, or more, whose Congregations most part are left destitute of Preaching that Day. Great Confluence from all the Country, and many Congregations about are gathered at them, and in every Day of their Meeting, (which are *Saturday*, the *Lord's Day*, and *Monday. N. B. No Fast Days.*) Many of these Ministers do preach successively one after another; so that Three or Four, or sometimes more, do preach at their Preparation, and as many on the *Monday* following; and on the *Sabbath* sometimes Three or Four preach before they go to the Action, besides these who preach to the Multitude of People, who cannot be contained in the Church. These Practices, as they are a clear Violation of the Order unanimously established in the Church, and do occasion great Animosity and Alienation of simple People, against those Ministers who will not imitate these irregular Courses, so uninterested Observers perceive a clear Design in all this, to set up themselves as the only zealous and pious People
worthy

‘ worthy to be trusted, and followed in our
 ‘ publick Differences : Which, if it be not
 ‘ an Injury to that sacred Ordinance, and
 ‘ an Improving thereof, (which should be a
 ‘ Bond of Unity and Communion) to be a
 ‘ Wedge to drive and fix a Rent, let the
 ‘ judicious and sober Reader judge.” Thus
 far these two Authors.

I am heartily sorry there is still too much
 Ground for these Complaints, and that thir
 Citations are so applicable to the Purpose ;
 but seeing the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* has
 so far endeavoured an Amendment, I seri-
 ously wish the other Presbyteries in the King-
 dom may speedily follow their Example ; so
 that this Church may improve in Holiness,
 Peace and Unity, is the sincere Prayer of,

March 29th,

1721.

Laico Philo-Presbyter.



*Good ADVICE to Ministers and their Wives ;
 Or, Martha's Care set right.*

HOW unsuitable are the sumptuous
 Dinners on the *Monday* after that holy,
 solemn and august Sacrament of the *Lord's*
Supper ! These that have partaked seriously,

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and

and who are in a good Frame, may wear out of it; but such Crowd and Hurry blows it away. How unseasonable is it, after Feasting upon the broken Body and precious Blood of a crucified Saviour, to be feeding plentifully, after the Exhortations in the Sermons to Sobriety, Watchfulness, and a holy Conversation becoming the Gospel, how unaccountable is it in Ministers and Elders, and other devout Persons, to give over their Watch so soon, by the promiscuous Company, and little edifying Discourse at the Minister's Table? And tho' there be no Excess there in Eating and Drinking, yet after such a solemn Ordinance as the holy Communion, a particular Temperance and Moderation is required, and more Abstractedness of Thought necessary for to compose the Mind, and enable us to put in Practice by the Assistance of the holy Spirit the Vows, Resolutions and Engagements made before or at the Lord's Table; in such a Hurry, how can we watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation, our blessed Saviour's Advice to his Disciples after the Institution of this holy Sacrament? Or how shall we renounce the World and the Flesh, and resist the Devil, when we are thus intangled in Pleasure, and, as it were, busking a Bait for Satan's Temptations? Or thus, how can we observe these Exhortations
of

of the Apostle *Paul*, *Rom.* xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Eph.* v. 18. and of the Apostle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Altho' the Conversation at such Meetings may be innocent, yet it is seldom pertinent; few Words dropt of Religion and Godliness, no Repetition of Sermons, or any Word about them, except Ministers criticising and rallying one another, bragging of their long Harangues and Discourses, and the throng Auditory of idle Spectators; but they do not consider that we must account for every idle Word, superfluous as well as bad; That Sermons are to be weighed as well as measured, and that a Person's having spent much Time in a long Discourse, is no Merit, where the Hearers for the most Part are weary, or only amused thereby: But I wish there were not too much Reason to suspect, that thir Occasions are the only Vent for Ministers Vanity in shewing their Gifts; whereas, the Pastor's Practice is often more effectual than his Preaching. For when the People see their Ministers and Elders so soon comply with the World, and forget their own Exhortations, will they not think, what may they not do? and that all their Noise of Temperance, Abstinence, Moderation, Guard of the Tongue, &c. is all meer Show, that they are *Men of like Passions*, and as soon entangled as others. Yea, this is a Scandal both to the Godly and Profane; for as the last may too justly say, That few Ministers rule well their own Houses, when they cannot moderate themselves, or their Wives, in the Emulation or Extravagance in the Entertainment (so to call it) at the Christian Infare. So the First have too much Reason to think, that the Ministers Moderation and Sobriety during the Communion Days, is only like the Papists Fasting on *Fridays*, or during *Lent*, from Flesh, when they Feast more luxuriously upon Fish.

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THE ancient Christians had their *Agape*, Love Feasts, after the Communion, which are reprov'd by the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xi. and the Church was soon obliged to forbear them. And Mr. Warden, in his *Practical Essay on the Lord's Supper*, Page 188. very seriously thus dissuades Monday Dinners, *It were to be wished, these Meetings and Eatings together, that are in some Places on Mondays after Communions, which howsoever sober as to outward Behaviour, and free from all Immoderation; yet that they were either intirely abolished, or more Christianly and to spiritual Edification managed; for as they now are, they give no small Disturbance to the Giver, and I fear very great Diversion to the Receivers; so that they certainly should be forborn, or very much regulate.* The Civil Government have sumptuary Laws, the Ecclesiastical have as much Need of Rules of Sobriety, especially among the Clergy. Our blessed Saviour, after the first Communion with his Disciples, sung a Hymn, and went out with them to the Mount of Olives, *Matth. xxvi. 30.* and some Ministers after the *Mondays Dinners*, sing a Psalm. Now, lest it may be thought Niggardness in the Ministers forbearing that Entertainment, (which has been so long in use) to the Ministers, their Wives, Children, the Heritors of the Parish or Neighbourhood, their Ladies and Children, with the Elders, Precentor and Bedal, which often make a Company of Thirty or Forty; let the Ministers bestow that Expence in Charity, or to some pious Use, of which there are too many Objects; such as, the applying that Expence for a second or third Communion Elements in the Year. As also, if that laudable Charity of Examining and Catechising the Poor that wait for Alms that Day, were continued, it might be bestowed for buying Books to such as want, or other Reward to these that increase in Knowledge, the Ministers taking

List

List of such Poor, that such may endeavour Literally to be among the Blessed, *whose are the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matth. v. 3.

THIS would also save the Anxiety of the Minister's Wife, in preparing Dinners all the Sermon Days, especially the *Monday*, and the Attendance of the Servants in making the Feast ready ; which, I fear, the Session would account scandalous ; yea, could not pass without a Censure in any other at that Time.

AND altho' a great many Ministers acknowledge, and are sensible of their Fault in this, and the Indecency and Confusion arising thereby ; yet they do not consider, That the Throng and Tent-Sermons, and consequently the Number of Brethren on *Mondays*, are owing to the having so many Vacancies about, and thereby too many Ministers as Assistants : Instead of Seven or Eight, Two or Three might serve any Parish, and none of them next Neighbours, unless their Parishes were supplied, which would cause no Vacancies : Two Sermons on the Fast-day, One upon *Saturday*, and One upon *Monday*, are sufficient ; yea, as appointed by the Acts of the General Assembly, and lately by the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, but not without Opposition, observed ; and I humbly propose, that the Minister of the Parish should always take one of the Fast-day's Sermons, being best acquainted with the State of his People. Thir Things, when urged, are very freely granted, but who has the Resolution to amend what they are sensible is thus wrong ? Are not Ministers Customs, if Evil, to be broke off, as well as of the People ; yea, should they not shew their Readiness in giving Example, and a greater Care in shunning all Appearance of Evil : For after such solemn Occasions, and Heart-affecting Sermons, Ministers and People had more Need to go to their own

own Homes and Retirements, than to converse in any mixt Company, and far less should be troubled, in giving or receiving Entertainment, or keeping up of Table Discourse; a good Frame soon slips off, and needs much to be watched, and when gone is not so soon recovered, nor do many think of it again, till the Week before the next Communion.

IN that French Book, *The Guide to the Communion*, allowed by the Cardinal De Noailles, there is much Devotion, and useful Instruction and Direction for Self-Examination, in that Article, *How we ought to spend the Day in which we have Communicate*; says, *That we ought to employ it in hearing and meditating on the Word of God; to pass over, and reflect upon the good Thoughts and Resolutions which we have taken, the Graces which we have received, and to edify others by our grave and serious Discourses and holy Conduct.* This is very like the Behaviour of him who has betray'd Jesus Christ, to give the Morning to God, and the Afternoon to the World; to Communicate in the Church in the Morning, and at Night to go to the Play-house and Gaming. And in the Rules, *How to Communicate every Day*, the same Author says, *That we ought to overcome all evil Inclinations, not only an Affection to Things useless and dangerous, as Gaming, Feasts, &c. but even our Natural Inclinations.*

☛ May this be a Heel-Chap to Monday-Dinners. AMEN.

F I N I S.

NOTA, In the Title Page, for *ad honesta videnti*, read *honestia videnti*; for *Impensus* read *Impensis*; for *munera* read *munere*.